

SPECIFICATION

TITLE Fluid apparatus having a pump and an accumulator

5 REFERENCE TO ANY RELATED APPLICATIONS

 This application is a continuation-in-part of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 09/868,939 filed July 18, 2001 which is a U.S. national phase application of PCT International Application No. PCT/JP00/08160 filed Nov. 20, 2000.

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BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

 The present invention relates to a fluid apparatus which has a bellows type pump and an accumulator for reducing pulsations of the pump.

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DESCRIPTION OF THE PRIOR ART

 As a pump for circulating and transporting chemical liquid in various processes such as washing of surfaces of ICs or liquid crystal display devices in a semiconductor producing apparatus, used is a bellows type pump in which no particles are generated as a result of the pumping operation (for example, Japanese Patent Application Laying-Open No. 3-179184). In a pump of this kind, pulsations are produced by reciprocal motion due to extension and contrac-

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tion of the bellows. In order to reduce the pulsations, therefore, also an accumulator is used (for example, Japanese Patent Application Laying-Open No. 10-196521).

In such a fluid apparatus having a bellows, in the case where abrasive liquid containing slurry such as silica is used as a polishing solution for Chemical Mechanical Polishing (CMP) of a semiconductor wafer, a hard disk which is to be incorporated into a computer, and the like, for example, there arises the following problem.

Namely, in the pump or the accumulator, the bellows which is extendingly and contractingly deformable in the axial direction is placed in the pump body or the accumulator body. In the case where liquid containing a material such as slurry which sediments is used, therefore, the sedimenting material easily collects and sets in an extending and contracting portion of the bellows, thereby causing the bellows to be broken.

A suction port and a discharge port for liquid are disposed in the pump, and a suction check valve and a discharge check valve are disposed in the suction port and the discharge port, respectively. Therefore, the pump cannot be easily made compact. Moreover, the accumulator is connected to the downstream side of the discharge port of the pump via a connecting pipe or the like, so that a pressure loss due to vibrations of the connecting pipe and friction

with the inner face of the pipe during passage through the pipe is produced in liquid discharged from the discharge check valve. Therefore, the pressure of liquid flowing into the accumulator is lower than that of liquid discharged from the pump. As a result, the response performance of the accumulator cannot be easily improved, and gas components and the like entering the accumulator cannot be easily discharged with being embraced by the liquid.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The invention has been conducted in order to solve the problems. It is an object of the invention to provide a fluid apparatus in which the response performance of an accumulator can be enhanced, the state can be promptly transferred to the steady state, and, even in the case where transported liquid containing a sedimenting material such as slurry is used, the sedimenting material can be prevented from stagnating and collecting in an extending and contracting portion of a bellows of a pump, or the like.

In the invention, in order to attain the object, the fluid apparatus having a pump and an accumulator is configured as shown in, for example, Figs. 1 to 14, or 15, 16, and 17.

The pump comprises, in a pump body, a pump inflow passage, a pump outflow passage, and a pump bellows which is

extendingly and contractingly deformable in an axial direction. A pump liquid chamber is formed inside the pump bellows. A suction port and a discharge port are formed in a wall face of the pump body facing the pump liquid chamber, the suction port communicates with the pump inflow passage, and the discharge port communicates with the pump outflow passage. A suction check valve is disposed in the suction port, and a discharge check valve is disposed downstream from the pump outflow passage. According to the configuration, liquid is sucked from the suction port via the suction check valve into the pump liquid chamber by extension of the pump bellows, and liquid in the pump liquid chamber is discharged from the discharge port via the pump outflow passage and the discharge check valve by contraction of the pump bellows. By contrast, the accumulator comprises, in an accumulator body, an accumulator inflow passage, an accumulator outflow passage, and an accumulator bellows which is extendingly and contractingly deformable in an axial direction. An accumulator liquid chamber is formed inside the accumulator bellows. An inflow port and an outflow port are formed in a wall face of the accumulator body facing the accumulator liquid chamber, the inflow port communicates with the accumulator inflow passage, and the outflow port communicates with the accumulator outflow passage. The accumulator inflow passage is connected to a

downstream of the pump outflow passage. Pulsations caused by a discharge pressure of liquid discharged from the pump liquid chamber is damped by a capacity change of the accumulator liquid chamber due to extending and contracting operations of the accumulator bellows. The discharge check valve of the pump is disposed in the accumulator inflow passage in the accumulator body in place of the pump body.

In the thus configured fluid apparatus having a pump and an accumulator, pulsations of the pump can be reduced. Moreover, the discharge check valve is disposed inside the accumulator. As compared with the case where both the suction check valve and the discharge check valve are disposed in the pump, therefore, the interior of the pump can be reduced by a degree corresponding to the volume occupied by the discharge check valve, so that the pump can be made compact.

Furthermore, the discharge check valve of the pump is disposed in the accumulator inflow passage, and hence is in close proximity to the accumulator liquid chamber. Therefore, no pressure loss is produced in liquid which is discharged from the pump liquid chamber through the discharge check valve, or, even when a pressure loss is produced, the loss is very small in degree, so that the liquid flows into the accumulator liquid chamber at a high pressure which is substantially equal to the discharge pressure of the pump.

As a result, a strong flow is formed in the accumulator liquid chamber by the flowing-in liquid. Even in the case where liquid containing a material such as slurry which sediments is used, therefore, the amount of the sedimenting material collecting in an extending and contracting portion of the accumulator bellows can be reduced as far as possible.

Since liquid at a high pressure flows into the accumulator liquid chamber, the accumulator bellows can rapidly extend and contract to enhance the responsibility, so that pulsations of the pump can be efficiently reduced.

In some cases, gasses such as air enter the accumulator liquid chamber during a starting process. Such gas components in the accumulator liquid chamber can be embraced into the strong flow produced in the accumulator liquid chamber, and efficiently discharged from the discharge port. As a result, the state can be promptly transferred to the stable steady state.

The discharge check valve of the pump may be placed in a middle portion of the accumulator inflow passage. Alternatively, the valve may be placed in the inflow port which is formed in a downstream end of the accumulator inflow passage. The alternative is more preferable because the valve can be disposed further close to the accumulator liquid chamber.

In this case, a valve casing of the discharge check valve may be formed so as to protrude from the wall face in which the inflow port of the accumulator body is formed, into the accumulator liquid chamber, and an outlet may be
5 opened in a tip end of the valve casing or the vicinity thereof to cause the interior of the valve casing to communicate with the accumulator liquid chamber. This configuration is more preferable because liquid discharged from the discharge check valve is introduced into the accumulator liquid chamber so as to directly hit against the inner
10 face of the accumulator bellows, and hence the accumulator bellows can expand more satisfactorily, so that the responsibility can be enhanced.

The structures of the suction check valve and the discharge check valve are requested only to prevent liquid
15 from reversely flowing, and are not particularly restricted to specific ones. For example, each of the valves comprises: a cylindrical valve casing; a valve seat; and a valve element which is inserted into the valve casing, and
20 the valve element is urged by valve closing urging means to be closely contacted with the valve seat, thereby preventing liquid from reversely flowing.

For example, each of the check valves may be structured so that the valve casing is disposed with
25 setting an axis vertical, and the valve closing urging

means is configured by own weight of the valve element so that the valve element is closely contacted with the valve seat in the valve casing by its own weight, thereby preventing liquid from reversely flowing. In this configuration, even in the case where liquid containing a sedimenting material such as slurry is used, the sedimenting material can be prevented from stagnating and aggregating inside the check valve.

The valve closing urging means may be configured by a valve closing spring inserted into the valve casing. In this case, the valve element can be surely pressed by the resilient force of the valve closing spring, and hence it is possible to suppress chattering from occurring.

The axes of the pump bellows and the accumulator bellows are not always necessary to define an axis in a specific direction. In the case where the axes define a vertical axis, even when liquid containing a sedimenting material such as slurry is used, the sedimenting material can be prevented as far as possible from staying in the extending and contracting portion of the bellows. Therefore, this configuration is preferable.

The discharge port of the pump may be disposed in an inner bottom face of the pump body, and the inner bottom face may be formed into a shape in which the face is downward inclined as moving toward the discharge port. The

outflow port of the accumulator may be disposed in an inner bottom face of the accumulator body, and the inner bottom face may be formed into a shape in which the face is downward inclined as moving toward the outflow port. In these cases, also liquid containing a sedimenting material such as slurry can be smoothly discharged along the downward inclined face of the inner bottom face toward the discharge port or the outflow port, whereby the sedimenting material can be prevented from collecting and setting on the inner bottom face.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Fig. 1 is a longitudinal sectional front overall view of a fluid apparatus;

Fig. 2A is an enlarged section view of an extending and contracting portion of a bellows of a pump of the fluid apparatus;

Fig. 2B is an enlarged section view showing a modification of the extending and contracting portion of the bellows of the pump of the fluid apparatus;

Fig. 2C is an enlarged section view showing a further modification of the extending and contracting portion of the bellows of the pump of the fluid apparatus;

Fig. 3 is an enlarged section view of a suction ball type check valve of the pump of the fluid apparatus;

Fig. 4A is an enlarged section view of an extending and contracting portion of a bellows of an accumulator of the fluid apparatus;

5 Fig. 4B is an enlarged section view showing a modification of the extending and contracting portion of the bellows of the accumulator of the fluid apparatus;

Fig. 4C is an enlarged section view showing a further modification of the extending and contracting portion of the bellows of the accumulator of the fluid apparatus;

10 Fig. 5 is an enlarged section view of a discharge ball type check valve of the pump of the fluid apparatus;

Fig. 6 is an enlarged longitudinal sectional front view of an automatic pressure adjusting mechanism of the accumulator of the fluid apparatus;

15 Fig. 7 is an enlarged longitudinal sectional front view showing another modification of the automatic pressure adjusting mechanism of the accumulator of the fluid apparatus;

20 Fig. 8 is a plan view of the automatic pressure adjusting mechanism shown in Fig. 7;

Fig. 9 is a section view taken along the line IX-IX of Fig. 8;

Fig. 10 is a section view of an air supply valve of the automatic pressure adjusting mechanism shown in Fig. 7;

25 Fig. 11 is a section view of an air discharge valve of

the automatic pressure adjusting mechanism shown in Fig. 7;

Fig. 12 is a section view taken along the line XII-XII of Fig. 7;

Fig. 13A is an operation diagram of the air supply valve and the air discharge valve of the automatic pressure adjusting mechanism in the case where the fluid pressure in the bellows of the accumulator is raised;

Fig. 13B is an operation diagram of a guide shaft and a guide sleeve of the automatic pressure adjusting mechanism in the case where the fluid pressure in the bellows of the accumulator is raised;

Fig. 14A is an operation diagram of the air supply valve and the air discharge valve of the automatic pressure adjusting mechanism in the case where the fluid pressure in the bellows of the accumulator is lowered;

Fig. 14B is an operation diagram of the guide shaft and the guide sleeve of the automatic pressure adjusting mechanism in the case where the fluid pressure in the bellows of the accumulator is lowered;

Fig. 15 is a longitudinal sectional front overall view of a fluid apparatus of another embodiment;

Fig. 16 is a longitudinal sectional front overall view showing another embodiment of the pump of the fluid apparatus; and

Fig. 17 is a longitudinal sectional front overall view

of a fluid apparatus of a further embodiment.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

An embodiment of the fluid apparatus having a bellows
5 according to the invention will be described with reference
to Figs. 1 to 6. The fluid apparatus of the embodiment is
configured by a pump P and an accumulator A which reduces
pulsations of the pump.

Referring to Fig. 1, the pump body 1 of the pump P
10 has: a cylindrical pump casing 3 in which an upper end is
closed by an upper wall 2; and a bottom wall 4 which air-
tightly closes an open lower end of the casing 3. A pump
inflow passage 5 and a pump outflow passage 6 for liquid
are formed in the bottom wall 4.

15 A bottomed cylindrical pump bellows 7 which is extend-
ingly and contractingly deformable in a direction of the
axis B is placed in the casing 3 with setting the axis B
vertical. The bellows 7 is molded by a fluororesin which
has excellent heat and chemical resistances, such as PTFE
20 (polytetrafluoroethylene) or PFA (perphloroalkoxy). A
lower opening peripheral edge 7a of the bellows is air-
tightly pressingly fixed to an upper side face of the bot-
tom wall 4 by an annular fixing plate 8, whereby the inner
space of the pump body 1 is partitioned into a pump liquid
25 chamber 9 inside the bellows 7, and a pump air chamber 10

outside the bellows 7.

Referring to Figs. 2A, 2B, and 2C, in the bellows 7, an extending and contracting portion which is configured by forming ridge-like folds 71 and valley-like folds 72 in a vertically alternate and continuous manner is formed into a shape in which the lower one of upper and lower lamella portions 71a and 71b of each of the ridge-like folds 71, or the lower lamella portion 71b is downward inclined as moving toward the axis B, not only in an extending state but also in a contracting state as shown in Figs. 2A, 2B, and 2C. In the contracting state of each of the ridge-like folds 71, the inclination angle α of the lower lamella portion 71b, i.e., the angle α formed by a horizontal line L perpendicular to the axis B is 1 to 45°, and more preferably 5 to 15°. However, the upper lamella portion 71a of each ridge-like fold 71 may be arbitrarily formed into one of the following shapes in the contracting state: a shape in which, as shown in Fig. 2A, the upper lamella portion is downward inclined at the same inclination angle as the lower lamella portion 71b; that in which, as shown in Fig. 2B, the upper lamella portion is horizontally formed in parallel with the horizontal line L perpendicular to the axis B; and that in which, as shown in Fig. 2C, the upper lamella portion is upward inclined as moving toward the axis B. In the illustrated examples, edges of the folded

portion of each of the ridge-like folds 71 and the valley-like folds 72 are angled. Alternatively, the edges may be rounded (as indicated by the two-dot chain lines R).

Referring to Fig. 1, the pump body 1 comprises a reciprocal driving device 22 which drives the bellows 7 to extend and contract. In the reciprocal driving device 22, a cylinder 11 is formed on the side of the upper face of the upper wall 2 of the pump body 1 so that the axis of the cylinder coincides with the axis B of the bellows 7, and a piston 12 which reciprocates in the cylinder 11 is coupled to a center portion of a closed upper end portion 7b of the bellows 7 via a piston rod 13 which is passed through the upper wall 2. Pressurized air which is fed from a pressurized air supplying device (not shown) such as a compressor is supplied alternately to the interior of the cylinder 11 and the air chamber 10 through air holes 14 and 15 which are formed respectively in the cylinder 11 and the upper wall 2. Namely, proximity sensors 16a and 16b are attached to the cylinder 11, and a sensor sensing member 17 is attached to the piston 12. In accordance with the reciprocal motion of the piston 12, the sensor sensing member 17 alternately approaches the proximity sensors 16a and 16b, whereby the supply of the pressurized air which is fed from the pressurized air supplying device into the cylinder 11, and that into the air chamber 10 are automatically alter-

nately switched over. In accordance with the reciprocal motion of the piston 12, the bellows 7 is driven to extend and contract.

5 A suction port 18 and a discharge port 19 are opened in the inner bottom face 4a of the bottom wall 4 which faces the liquid chamber 9 so as to communicate with the inflow passage 5 and the outflow passage 6, respectively. Preferably, the inner bottom face 4a of the liquid chamber 9 is formed into a shape in which the face is downward inclined toward the discharge port 19, and more preferably the discharge port 19 is formed in the lowest position of the inner bottom face 4a which is formed into a conical shape. However, it does not matter whether the discharge port 19 is on the axis B of the bellows 7 or in a position 10 deviated from the axis B. The downward inclination angle is 1 to 45°, and more preferably 5 to 15°.

A suction ball type check valve 20 is disposed in the suction port 18 of the bottom wall 4. As shown in Fig. 3, the suction ball type check valve 20 is configured by a cylindrical valve casing 201 and ball valve elements 202. 20 The valve casing 201 is firmly fixed to the suction port 18 with setting the axis D of the casing vertical, by screwing, engaging means, etc. The illustrated suction ball type check valve 20 has a structure in which the ball valve elements 202 are vertically arranged in two stages. The 25

valve casing 201 is divided into vertical halves or a first valve casing 201a and a second valve casing 201b. A first ball valve element 202a and a second ball valve element 202b are disposed in the first valve casing 201a and the
5 second valve casing 201b, respectively.

The first valve casing 201a is formed into a cylindrical shape, and an inlet 203 is opened in the lower end. An external thread portion 204 which is disposed in the outer periphery of the casing is screwed into an internal thread
10 portion 205 which is disposed in a lower step side of the inner periphery of the suction port 18 of the bottom wall 4, whereby the first valve casing is fixed to the bottom wall 4 with setting the axis D vertical.

The second valve casing 201b is formed into a cylindrical shape which is larger in diameter than the first
15 valve casing 201a, and an outlet 206 is opened in the upper end. An external thread portion 207 which is disposed in the outer periphery of the lower end of the casing is screwed into an internal thread portion 208 which is disposed in an upper step side of the inner periphery of the
20 suction port 18 of the bottom wall 4 so that the diameter is larger than the inner diameter of the internal thread portion 205, and an internal thread portion 209 is screwed onto an external thread portion 210 of the upper end of the
25 outer periphery of the first valve casing 201a, whereby the

second valve casing is fixed to the bottom wall 4 so as to be concentric with the first valve casing 201a and protrude into the liquid chamber 9. In this case, a valve seat element 212 having a valve seat 211 is incorporated between the upper end of the first valve casing 201a and the lower end of the inner periphery of the second valve casing 201b. A valve seat 213 is disposed in an open end of the inflow passage 5 which faces the inlet 203 in the lower end of the first valve casing 201a. The first and second valve casings 201a and 201b, and the first and second ball valve elements 202a and 202b are molded by the same material as the bellows 7, or a fluororesin which has excellent heat and chemical resistances, such as PTFE or PFA.

According to this configuration, the first ball valve element 202a is caused by its own weight to be closely contacted with the valve seat 213 in the first valve casing 201a, and the second ball valve element 202b is caused by its own weight to be closely contacted with the valve seat 211 in the second valve casing 201b, thereby preventing liquid from reversely flowing. Namely, valve closing urging means for urging the ball valve elements 202a and 202b toward the valve seats are configured by own weights of the ball valve elements 202a and 202b, respectively. When liquid is to be sucked, the first and second ball valve ele-

ments 202a and 202b are respectively upward separated from the valve seats 213 and 211, to open the valve, and the liquid supplied from the inflow passage 5 is sucked into the liquid chamber 9 from the outlet 206 of the second valve casing 201b with passing between a vertical groove 214 formed in the inner periphery of the first valve casing 201a and the first ball valve element 202a, and a vertical groove 215 formed in the inner periphery of the second valve casing 201b and the ball second valve element 202b.

10 By contrast, as shown in Fig. 1, in the accumulator A, the accumulator body 25 has: a cylindrical accumulator casing 27 in which an upper end is closed by an upper wall 26; and a bottom wall 28 which airtightly closes an open lower end of the casing 27.

15 A bottomed cylindrical accumulator bellows 29 which is extendingly and contractingly deformable in a direction of the axis C is placed in the casing 27 with setting the axis C vertical. The bellows 29 is molded by a fluororesin which has excellent heat and chemical resistances, such as
20 PTFE (polytetrafluoroethylene) or PFA (perphloroalkoxy). A lower opening peripheral edge 29a of the bellows is airtightly pressingly fixed to an upper side face of the bottom wall 28 by an annular fixing plate 30, whereby the inner space of the accumulator body 25 is partitioned into an
25 accumulator liquid chamber 31 inside the bellows 29, and an

accumulator air chamber 32 outside the bellows 29.

An accumulator liquid inflow passage 33 and an accumulator liquid outflow passage 34 for liquid are formed in the bottom wall 28 of the accumulator body 25, and an inflow port 23 and an outflow port 24 are opened in the inner bottom face 28a of the bottom wall 28 which faces the liquid chamber 31 so as to communicate with the inflow passage 33 and the outflow passage 34, respectively. The accumulator inflow passage 33 is communicatively connected to the downstream end of the pump outflow passage 6 of the pump P via a joint 65.

In the same manner as the inner bottom face 4a of the liquid chamber of the pump P, preferably, the inner bottom face 28a of the liquid chamber 31 of the accumulator A is formed into a shape in which the face is downward inclined as moving toward the outflow port 24, and more preferably the outflow port 24 is formed in the lowest position of the inner bottom face 28a which is formed into a conical shape.

However, it does not matter whether the outflow port 24 is on the axis C of the bellows 29 or in a position deviated from the axis C. The downward inclination angle is 1 to 45°, and more preferably 5 to 15°.

In the accumulator bellows 29, in the same manner as the case of the pump bellows 7, as shown in Figs. 4A, 4B, and 4C, the extending and contracting portion of the bel-

lows 29 which is configured by forming ridge-like folds 291 and valley-like folds 292 in a vertically alternate and continuous manner is formed into a shape in which the lower one of upper and lower lamella portions 291a and 291b of each of the ridge-like folds 291, or the lower lamella portion 291b is downward inclined as moving toward the axis C, not only in an extending state, but also in a contracting state as shown in Figs. 4A, 4B, and 4C. In the contracting state of the ridge-like folds 291, the inclination angle α of the lower lamella portion 291b, i.e., the angle α formed by a horizontal line L perpendicular to the axis C is 1 to 45°, and more preferably 5 to 15°. However, the upper lamella portion 291a of each ridge-like fold 291 may be arbitrarily formed into one of the following shapes in the contracting state: a shape in which, as shown in Fig. 4A, the upper lamella portion is downward inclined at the same inclination angle as the lower lamella portion 291b; that in which, as shown in Fig. 4B, the upper lamella portion is horizontally formed in parallel with the horizontal line L perpendicular to the axis C; and that in which, as shown in Fig. 4C, the upper lamella portion is upward inclined as moving toward the axis C. In the illustrated examples, edges of the folded portion of each of the ridge-like folds 291 and the valley-like folds 292 are angled. Alternatively, the edges may be rounded (as indicated by the two-

dot chain lines R).

A discharge ball type check valve 21 of the pump P is disposed in the inflow port 23 of the inner bottom face 28a of the accumulator liquid chamber 31. The inflow port is the downstream end of the inflow passage 33. The discharge ball type check valve 21 has the same structure as the structure of the above-mentioned suction ball type check valve 20. As shown in Fig. 5, the suction ball type check valve 21 is configured by a cylindrical valve casing 220 and ball valve elements 221. The valve casing 220 is fixed to the inflow port 23 with setting the axis G of the casing vertical. The valve casing 220 is divided into vertical halves or a first valve casing 220a and a second valve casing 220b. A first ball valve element 221a and a second ball valve element 221b are disposed in the first valve casing 220a and the second valve casing 220b, respectively.

The first valve casing 220a is formed into a cylindrical shape, and an inlet 223 is opened in the lower end. An external thread portion 224 which is disposed in the outer periphery of the casing is screwed into an internal thread portion 225 which is disposed in a lower step side of the inner periphery of the inflow port 23 of the bottom wall 28, whereby the first valve casing is fixed to the bottom wall 28 with setting the axis G vertical.

The second valve casing 220b is formed into a cylin-

drical shape which is larger in diameter than the first valve casing 220a, and an outlet 226 is opened in the upper end. An external thread portion 227 which is disposed in the outer periphery of the lower end of the casing is 5 screwed into an internal thread portion 228 which is disposed in an upper step side of the inner periphery of the inflow port 23 of the bottom wall 28 so that the diameter is larger than the inner diameter of the internal thread portion 225, and an internal thread portion 229 which is 10 disposed in the inner periphery of the lower end is screwed onto an external thread portion 235 of the upper end of the outer periphery of the first valve casing 220a, whereby the second valve casing is fixed to the bottom wall 28 so as to be concentric with the first valve casing 220a and pro- 15 trude into the liquid chamber 31. In this case, a valve seat element 231 having a valve seat 230 is incorporated between the upper end of the first valve casing 220a and the lower end of the inner periphery of the second valve casing 220b. A valve seat 232 is disposed in an open end 20 of the inflow passage 33 which faces the inlet 223 in the lower end of the first valve casing 220a.

According to this configuration, the first ball valve element 221a is caused by its own weight to be closely con- tacted with the valve seat 232 in the first valve casing 25 221a, and the second ball valve element 221b is caused by

its own weight to be closely contacted with the valve seat 230 in the second valve casing 220b, thereby preventing liquid from reversely flowing. Namely, valve closing urging means for urging the ball valve elements 221a and 221b toward the valve seats are configured by own weights of the ball valve elements 221a and 221b, respectively. When liquid is to be discharged to the accumulator liquid chamber 31, the first and second ball valve elements 221a and 221b are respectively upward separated from the valve seats 232 and 230, to open the valve, and the liquid supplied from the pump P is discharged into the accumulator liquid chamber 31 from the outlet 226 of the second valve casing 220b with passing between a vertical groove 233 formed in the inner periphery of the first valve casing 220a and the first ball valve element 221a, and a vertical groove 234 formed in the inner periphery of the second valve casing 220b and the second ball valve element 221b. The first and second valve casings 220a and 220b, and the first and second ball valve elements 221a and 221b are molded by a fluororesin which has excellent heat and chemical resistances, such as PTFE or PFA, in the same manner as the casings and valve elements of the suction ball type check valve 20.

As shown in Fig. 6, an opening 35 for allowing air to inflow and outflow is formed in the vicinity of the center

of the outer face of the upper wall 26 of the casing 27 of the accumulator A, a valve case 37 having a flange 36 is fitted into the opening 35, and the flange 36 is detachably fastened and fixed to the outside of the upper wall 26 by bolts 38 and the like.

An air supply port 39 and an air discharge port 40 are formed in the valve case 37 so as to be juxtaposed in parallel. An automatic air supply valve mechanism 41 is disposed in the air supply port 39. When the capacity of the liquid chamber 31 is increased to exceed a predetermined range, the air supply valve mechanism supplies air of a pressure which is equal to or higher than the maximum pressure of the transported liquid, into the air chamber 32, thereby raising the filling pressure in the air chamber 32.

An automatic air discharge valve mechanism 42 is disposed in the air discharge port 40. When the capacity of the liquid chamber 31 is decreased to exceed the predetermined range, the air discharge valve mechanism discharges air from the air chamber 32 to lower the filling pressure in the air chamber 32.

The automatic air supply valve mechanism 41 comprises: an air supply valve chamber 43 which is formed in the valve case 37 so as to communicate with the air supply port 39; an air supply valve element 44 which is slidable in the valve chamber 43 along the axial direction of the chamber

to open and close the air supply port 39; a spring 45 which always urges the valve element 44 to the closing position; a guide member 48 having, in an inner end portion, a valve seat 46 for the air supply valve element 44, and a through hole 47 through which the air supply valve chamber 43 and the air chamber 32 communicate with each other, the guide member 48 being screwingly fixed to the valve case 37; and an air supply valve operating rod 49 which is slidably passed through the through hole 47 of the guide member 48.

Under the condition where the bellows 29 is in the reference position S in a mean pressure state of the liquid pressure in the liquid chamber 31, the air supply valve element 44 is in close contact with the valve seat 46 of the guide member 48 to close the air supply port 39, and an end portion 49a of the air supply valve operating rod 49 which faces the air chamber 32 is separated from a closed upper end portion 29b of the bellows 29 by a stroke E.

By contrast, the automatic air discharge valve mechanism 42 comprises: an air discharge valve chamber 50 which is formed in the valve case 37 so as to communicate with the air discharge port 40; an air discharge valve element 51 which is slidable in the valve chamber 50 along the axial direction of the chamber to open and close the air discharge port 40; an air discharge valve rod 53 in which the valve element 51 is disposed at the tip end, and a flange

52 is disposed at the rear end; a spring receiver 55 screw-
ingly fixed into the air discharge valve chamber 50, and
having a through hole 54 through which the air discharge
valve rod 53 is passed; a cylindrical slider 56 through
5 which a rear end portion of the air discharge valve rod 53
is slidably passed, and which is prevented by the flange 52
from slipping off; a closing spring 57 which is disposed
between the air discharge valve element 51 and the spring
receiver 55; and an opening spring 58 which is disposed be-
10 tween the spring receiver 55 and the slider 56. The inner
diameter of the through hole 54 of the spring receiver 55
is larger than the shaft diameter of the air discharge
valve rod 53, so as to form a gap 59 between the two compo-
nents. The air discharge valve chamber 50 and the air
15 chamber 32 communicate with each other via the gap 59. Un-
der the state where the bellows 29 is in the reference po-
sition S, the air discharge valve element 51 closes the air
discharge port 40, and the flange 52 at the rear end of the
air discharge valve rod 53 is separated from the inner face
20 of a closing end portion 56a of the slider 56 by a stroke
F.

As indicated by the phantom line 60 in Fig. 6, an end
of the valve case 37 on the side of the air chamber is
elongated in the direction directed to the interior of the
25 air chamber 32, and a stopper 61 is disposed at the end of

the elongated portion. When the bellows 29 is moved in the direction of extending the liquid chamber 31 in excess of the predetermined stroke E to operate the air supply valve operating rod 49, the stopper restricts a further movement of the bellows 29.

Next, the operations of the pump P and the accumulator A which are configured as described above will be described.

When the pressurized air which is fed from the pressurized air supplying device (not shown) such as a compressor is supplied to the interior of the cylinder 11 via the air hole 14, the piston 12 is raised in the direction x in Fig. 1, and the pump bellows 7 extends in the same direction to suck the transported liquid in the pump inflow passage 5 into the pump liquid chamber 9 via the suction ball type check valve 20. When the pressurized air is supplied into the pump air chamber 10 via the air hole 15 and air is discharged through the air hole 14, the piston 12 is lowered in the direction y in Fig. 1, and the bellows 7 contracts in the same direction to discharge the transported liquid in the liquid chamber 9 from the discharge port 19 to the pump outflow passage 6. When the bellows 7 is driven to perform extending and contracting deformation by the reciprocal motion of the piston 12 in the cylinder 11 as described above, suction of the transported liquid from

the inflow passage 5 into the liquid chamber 9, and discharge of the transported liquid from the liquid chamber 9 to the outflow passage 6 are alternately repeated to conduct a predetermined pumping action. When the transported liquid is fed to a predetermined portion by this operation of the pump P, the pump discharge pressure generates pulsations due to repetition of peak and valley portions.

The transported liquid discharged from the liquid chamber 9 of the pump P via the discharge port 19 and the outflow passage 6 is passed through the accumulator inflow passage 33 and then sent into the accumulator liquid chamber 31 via the discharge ball type check valve 21 placed in the inflow port 23. The liquid is temporarily stored in the liquid chamber 31, and thereafter discharged into the accumulator outflow passage 34 via the outflow port 24. When the discharge pressure of the transported liquid is in a peak portion of a discharge pressure curve, the transported liquid causes the accumulator bellows 29 to be extendingly deformed so as to increase the capacity of the accumulator liquid chamber 31, and hence the pressure of the liquid is absorbed. At this time, the flow quantity of the transported liquid flowing out from the accumulator liquid chamber 31 is smaller than that of the liquid supplied from the pump P.

By contrast, when the discharge pressure of the trans-

ported liquid comes to a valley portion of the discharge pressure curve, the pressure of the transported liquid becomes lower than the filling pressure of the accumulator air chamber 32 which is compressed by extending deformation of the bellows 29 of the accumulator A, and hence the accumulator bellows 29 is contractingly deformed. At this time, the flow quantity of the transported liquid flowing out from the accumulator liquid chamber 31 is larger than that of the liquid flowing into the accumulator liquid chamber 31 from the pump P. This repeated operation, i.e., the capacity change of the accumulator liquid chamber 31 causes the pulsations to be absorbed and suppressed.

When the discharge pressure of the pump P is varied in the increasing direction during such an operation, the capacity of the accumulator liquid chamber 31 is increased by the transported liquid, with the result that the accumulator bellows 29 is largely extendingly deformed. When the amount of extending deformation of the bellows 29 exceeds the predetermined range E, the closed upper end portion 29b of the bellows 29 pushes the valve operating rod 49 toward the valve chamber. This causes the air supply valve element 44 of the automatic air supply valve mechanism 41 to be opened against the force of the spring 45, and air of the high pressure is supplied into the air chamber 32 through the air supply port 39, with the result that the

filling pressure of the air chamber 32 is raised. Therefore, the amount of extending deformation of the bellows 29 is restricted so as not to exceed the stroke E, whereby the capacity of the liquid chamber 31 is suppressed from being excessively increased. When the stopper 61 is disposed at the end of the valve case 37 on the side of the air chamber, the closed upper end portion 29b of the bellows 29 abuts against the stopper 61, so that the bellows 29 can be surely prevented from being excessively extendingly deformed. This is advantageous to prevent the bellows from being damaged. In accordance with the rise of the filling pressure in the air chamber 32, the bellows 29 contracts toward the reference position S. Therefore, the air supply valve operating rod 49 separates from the closed upper end portion 29b of the bellows 29, and the air supply valve element 44 returns to the closing position, so that the filling pressure in the air chamber 32 is fixed to an adjusted state.

By contrast, when the discharge pressure of the pump P is varied in the decreasing direction, the capacity of the accumulator liquid chamber 31 is decreased by the transported liquid, with the result that the accumulator bellows 29 is largely contractingly deformed. When the amount of contracting deformation of the bellows 29 exceeds the predetermined range F, the slider 56 of the automatic air dis-

charge valve mechanism 42 is moved in the contraction direction b of the bellows 29 by the urging function of the opening spring 58, in accordance with the movement of the closed upper end portion 29b of the bellows 29 in the contraction direction b, and the inner face of the closing end portion 56a of the slider 56 is engaged with the flange 52 of the air discharge valve rod 53. This causes the air discharge valve rod 53 to be moved in the direction b and the air discharge valve element 51 opens the air discharge port 40. As a result, the filled air in the air chamber 32 is discharged into the atmosphere through the air discharge port 40, and the filling pressure of the air chamber 32 is lowered. Therefore, the amount of contracting deformation of the bellows 29 is restricted so as not to exceed the stroke F, whereby the capacity of the liquid chamber 31 is suppressed from being excessively decreased. In accordance with the reduction of the filling pressure in the air chamber 32, the bellows 29 extends toward the reference position S. Therefore, the slider 56 is pushed by the closed upper end portion 29b of the bellows 29, to compress the opening spring 58 while moving in the direction a. The air discharge valve element 51 again closes the air discharge port 40 by the urging function of the closing spring 57, whereby the filling pressure in the air chamber 32 is fixed to the adjusted state. As a result, pulsations are effi-

ciently absorbed and the amplitude of pulsations is suppressed to a low level, irrespective of variation of the discharge pressure from the liquid chamber 9 of the pump P.

In the accumulator A of the embodiment, an automatic pressure adjusting mechanism configured by an automatic air supply valve mechanism 41 and an automatic air discharge valve mechanism 42 is provided in the air chamber 32. A mechanism of the configuration shown in Figs. 7 to 14 may be employed as the automatic pressure adjusting mechanism.

Specifically, as shown in Fig. 7, in the automatic pressure adjusting mechanism, an opening 35 is formed in the vicinity of the center of the upper wall 26 of the casing 27 of the accumulator A, a valve case 37 into which air supply and discharge valves are incorporated is fitted into the opening 35, and the flange 36 attached to the outer periphery of the rear end of the valve case 37 is detachably fastened and fixed to the upper wall 26 by bolts and the like. On the other hand, an air supply/discharge valve control plate 70 is abuttingly placed in a center area of the closed upper end portion 29b of the bellows 29 facing the air chamber 32, so as to be opposed to the valve case 37.

As shown in Fig. 8, an air supply port 39 and an air discharge port 40 are juxtaposed in the front end face of the valve case 37. The automatic air supply valve mecha-

nism 41 is disposed in the air supply port 39. When the capacity of the liquid chamber 31 is increased to exceed a predetermined range, the automatic air supply valve mechanism supplies air of a pressure which is higher than the maximum pressure of the transported liquid, into the air chamber 32, thereby raising the filling pressure in the air chamber 32. The automatic air discharge valve mechanism 42 is disposed in the air discharge port 40. When the capacity of the liquid chamber 31 is reduced to exceed the predetermined range, the automatic air discharge valve mechanism discharges air from the air chamber 32, thereby lowering the filling pressure in the air chamber 32.

In the automatic air supply valve mechanism 41, as shown in Fig. 7, an internal thread portion 171 is formed in the rear end face of the valve case 37 so as to communicate with the air supply port 39, and an air supply valve rod holder 172 which holds an air supply valve element 44 and an air supply valve rod 49 that is integral with the valve element is screwingly fixed to the internal thread portion 171 via an O-ring 73. In the air supply valve rod holder 172, an air supply valve chamber 43 is formed in a front side end portion which is screwed into the internal thread portion 171, a valve seat 46 is formed in the inner bottom of the air supply valve chamber 43, and a valve rod passing hole 74 is formed in the rear end portion so as to

coaxially communicate with the air supply valve chamber 43. A plurality of communication holes 75 through which the air supply valve chamber 43 communicates with the air chamber 32 via the valve rod passing hole 74 are formed in the outer periphery of the rear end portion of the air supply valve rod holder 172. The formation of the communication holes 75 improves the responsibility to a pressure change in the air chamber 32.

In the air supply valve rod holder 172, an air supply valve 36 is incorporated into the air supply valve chamber 43 so as to be movable in the axial direction, and the air supply valve rod 49 is passed through the valve rod passing hole 74. A rear end portion of the air supply valve rod 49 protrudes into the rear of the air supply valve holder 172.

The valve rod passing hole 74 is formed into a stepped shape having: a larger diameter hole portion 74a in which the inner diameter is larger than the outer diameter of the air supply valve rod 49 to form a communication gap between the hole portion and the air supply valve rod 49; and a guide hole portion 74b which is slightly larger than the outer diameter of the air supply valve rod 49 and slidingly contacted with the air supply valve rod 49 without leaving a substantial gap therebetween. When the air supply valve rod 49 of the air valve element 44 is slidingly guided by the guide hole portion 74b, the air valve element 44 can be

straightly moved in the air supply valve chamber 43 along the axial direction of the chamber.

In the air supply valve chamber 43, the air supply valve element 44 is always urged by a spring 45 so as to be
5 in the closing position where the element is closely contacted with the valve seat 46. The air supply valve element 44 is airtightly contacted with the valve seat 46 via an O-ring 76. As shown in Fig. 10, the O-ring 76 is fitted into an arcuate groove 77 formed in a corner portion of the
10 rear end face of the air supply valve element 44, whereby the O-ring is lockedly attached to the valve element.

In a state where the liquid pressure in the accumulator liquid chamber 31 is at an average pressure and the bellows 29 is in the reference position, the air supply
15 valve element 44 is closely contacted with the valve seat 46 of the air supply valve rod holder 172 to close the air supply port 39, and an end portion 49a of the air supply valve rod 49 facing the interior of the air chamber 32 is separated from the closed upper end portion 29b of the bel-
20 lows 29 by a predetermined stroke.

On the other hand, in the automatic air discharge valve mechanism 42, as shown in Fig. 7, an air discharge valve chamber 50 having a circular section shape, and an internal thread portion 78 having an inner diameter which
25 is larger than that of the air discharge valve chamber 50

are formed in the rear end face of the valve case 37 so as to coaxially communicate with the air discharge port 40. The air discharge valve element 51 having a shape in which flat faces 51a are formed in opposing portions on the circumference as shown in Fig. 14 is incorporated in the air discharge valve chamber 50 so as to be movable along the axial direction. The air discharge valve rod 53 is integrally coupled to the air discharge valve element 51. The air discharge valve rod 53 is passed through and held by a valve rod guide hole portion 79a so as to be slidable in the axial direction. The valve rod guide hole portion 79a is in the center of a discharge valve rod holder 79 which is screwingly fixed to the internal thread portion 78. In the air discharge valve rod holder 79, a plurality of communication holes 80 through which the air discharge valve chamber 50 communicates with the air chamber 32 are formed on the same circle that is centered at the valve rod guide hole portion 79a. A spring 81 through which the air discharge valve rod 53 is passed is interposed between the air discharge valve element 51 and the air discharge valve rod holder 79. The air discharge valve element 51 is always urged by the spring 81 so as to be in the closing position where the element is closely contacted with the valve seat 50a of the air discharge valve chamber 50. The air discharge valve element 51 is airtightly contacted with the

valve seat 50a via an O-ring 82. As shown in Fig. 11, the O-ring 82 is fitted into an arcuate groove 83 formed in a corner portion of the front end face of the air discharge valve element 51, whereby the O-ring is lockedly attached to the valve element.

In a state where the bellows 29 is in the reference position, the air discharge valve element 51 closes the air discharge port 40, and a flange 53a in the rear end of the air discharge valve rod 53 is separated from the inner face of a closed end portion of a sleeve 84 by a predetermined stroke.

On the other hand, the air supply/discharge valve control plate 70 which is abuttingly placed in the center area of the closed upper end portion 29b of the bellows 29 is formed into a disk-like shape, an air supply valve rod pressing portion 85 is recessed in the front face of the plate, and the sleeve 84 constituting an air discharge valve rod pulling portion 86 is fittingly fixed in juxtaposition with the air supply valve rod pressing portion 85. A guide hole portion 84a which is slightly larger than the outer diameter of the air discharge valve rod 53 and slidably contacted with the valve rod 53 without leaving a substantial gap therebetween is formed in a front end portion of the sleeve 84. The rear end portion of the air discharge valve rod 53 having the flange 53a is passed

through and coupled to the guide hole portion 84a in a slidable and slipping-off preventing manner. When the air discharge valve rod 53 is slidably guided by the guide hole portion 84a, the air discharge valve rod 53 can be straightly moved along the axial direction. The sleeve 84 may be formed integrally with the air supply/discharge valve control plate 70.

Springs 87 each consisting of a compression coil spring are interposed between the air supply valve rod pressing portion 85 of the air supply/discharge valve control plate 70 and the rear end portion of the air supply valve rod holder 172, and the sleeve 84 and the rear end face of the air discharge valve rod holder 79, so as to surround the outer peripheries of the air supply valve rod 49 and the air discharge valve rod 53, respectively. The air supply/discharge valve control plate 70 is urged by the springs 87 and 87 to be pressed toward the center area of the closed upper end portion 29b of the bellows 29.

As shown in Fig. 9, the air supply/discharge valve control plate 70 and the valve case 37 are coupled to each other by one, or preferably plural guide shafts 88 which are parallel to the extending and contracting directions of the bellows 29. In each of the guide shafts 88, the front end portion is fasteningly fixed to the rear end face of the valve case 37 by a nut 89 via a washer 89a, and the

rear end portion having a flange 88a is coupled to a guide sleeve 90 which is embeddedly fixed to the front end face of the air supply/discharge valve control plate 70, so as to be prevented from slipping off, and slidable in the axial direction. In the front end portion of each of the guide sleeves 90, a guide hole portion 90a which is slidably contacted with the corresponding guide shaft 88 without leaving a substantial gap therebetween is formed. The rear end portions of the guide shafts 88 are passed through the guide hole portions 90a, thereby enabling the air supply/discharge valve control plate 70 to be straightly moved in parallel with the extending and contracting directions of the bellows 29 under guidance of the guide shafts 88. The guide sleeves 90 may be formed integrally with the air supply/discharge valve control plate 70.

Next, the operation of the thus configured automatic air supply/discharge valve mechanisms 41 and 42 will be described.

When the discharge pressure of the reciprocating pump P is varied in the increasing direction, the capacity of the accumulator liquid chamber 31 is increased by the transported liquid, and the fluid pressure in the liquid chamber 31 overcomes the pressure in the accumulator air chamber 32, so that the bellows 29 is extendingly deformed.

As shown in Figs. 13A and 13B, this extending deformation

of the bellows 29 causes the air supply/discharge valve control plate 70 to be pushed by the center area of the closed upper end portion 29b of the bellows 29 toward the valve case 37. As a result, the rear end portion of the air supply valve rod 49 is pushed by the air supply valve rod pressing portion 85 of the air supply/discharge valve control plate 70, whereby the air supply valve element 44 which has been set to the closing state by the spring 45 is changed to the opening state. Therefore, the compressed air is supplied into the air chamber 32 through the air supply port 39 to raise the filling pressure in the air chamber 32. In accordance with the rise of the filling pressure in the air chamber 32, the bellows 29 is contracted. Then, the air supply valve rod pressing portion 85 of the air supply/discharge valve control plate 70 does not push the rear end portion of the air supply valve rod 49, and the air supply valve element 44 is set to the closing state by the spring 45 and the compressed air in the air chamber 32, so as to balance with the fluid pressure in the liquid chamber 31. When the bellows 29 is extended by a degree which is greater than the predetermined stroke, the closed upper end portion 29b of the diaphragm strikes against a stopper wall 27a of the casing 27 of the accumulator A which protrudes into the air chamber 32, whereby excessive extending deformation of the bellows 29 is re-

stricted, so that the diaphragm can be prevented from being damaged.

By contrast, when the discharge pressure of the reciprocating pump P is varied in the decreasing direction, the capacity of the accumulator liquid chamber 31 is reduced by the transported liquid, and the pressure in the accumulator air chamber 32 overcomes the fluid pressure in the liquid chamber 31, so that the bellows 29 is contractingly deformed. As shown in Figs. 14A and 14B, this contracting deformation of the bellows 29 causes the air supply/discharge valve control plate 70 to, in accordance with the movement of the closed upper end portion 29b of the bellows 29 in the contracting direction, be moved in the same direction while receiving the urging force of the springs 87. The air discharge valve rod 53 which is coupled to the discharge valve rod pulling portion 86 of the air supply/discharge valve control plate 70 is pulled in the same direction, whereby the air discharge valve element 51 is changed to the opening state. Therefore, the compressed air in the air chamber 32 is discharged to the atmosphere from the air discharge port 40 to lower the filling pressure in the air chamber 32. In accordance with the reduction of the filling pressure in the air chamber 32, the bellows 29 is extended. Then, the air supply/discharge valve control plate 70 is pushed by the center area of the

closed upper end portion 29b of the bellows 29, and the air discharge valve element 51 is caused to close the air discharge port 40 by the urging action of the spring 81. As a result, the filling pressure in the air chamber 32 is fixed
5 to the adjusted state.

As described above, when a fluid pressure is applied into the bellows 29, the compressed air is sucked or discharged until balance with the pressure is attained, whereby pulsations are efficiently absorbed and the amplitude of pulsations is suppressed to a low level, irrespective of variation of the discharge pressure of the reciprocating pump P.
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In this way, the air supply valve element 44 and the air discharge valve element 51 which are separately and independently disposed in the valve case 37 are subjected to the valve-opening control in accordance with expansion and contraction of the bellows 29, via the air supply valve rod pressing portion 85 and the air discharge valve rod pulling portion 86 on the air supply/discharge valve control plate
15 70. Since the air supply/discharge valve control plate 70 is placed so as to always abut against the center area of the closed upper end portion 29b of the bellows 29, no off-set load is applied to the bellows 29 even when the air supply valve element 44 and the air discharge valve element
20 51 are juxtaposed separately and independently in the valve
25

case 37. Therefore, the bellows 29 is always straightly
extendingly and contractingly deformed in the axial direc-
tion X-X of the valve case 37, whereby the responsibility
of the opening and closing operations of the air supply and
5 discharge valve elements 44 and 51 can be improved and the
performance of reducing pulsations can be ensured. The air
supply/discharge valve control plate 70 can be always en-
abled to be moved in parallel stably and surely by the
guiding action of the guide shafts 88. Consequently, the
10 air supply and discharge valve elements 44 and 51 can
faithfully perform the opening and closing operations cor-
responding to expansion and contraction of the bellows 29,
via the air supply/discharge valve control plate 70.

In the accumulator A of the above-described embodi-
15 ment, the automatic pressure regulating mechanism consist-
ing of the automatic air supply valve mechanism 41 and the
automatic air discharge valve mechanism 42 is attached to
the air chamber 32. The air chamber 32 is required only to
have the opening 35 for allowing air to inflow and outflow,
20 and is not always requested to have the automatic pressure
regulating mechanism. The pressure adjustment may be manu-
ally performed.

When the axes B and C of the bellows 7 of the pump P
and the bellows 29 of the accumulator A are set to be ver-
25 tical as in the above configuration, even in the case where

liquid containing a sedimenting material such as slurry is used, therefore, the sedimenting material can be prevented as far as possible from staying in the extending and contracting portions of the bellows 7 and 29.

5 Furthermore, each of the suction ball type check valve 20 and the discharge ball type check valve 21 of the pump P employs the own-weight closing mechanism which does not use a spring for urging a ball, and in which the valve casing 201 or 220 is set to be vertical, and the ball valve ele-
10 ments 202 or 221 are caused by their own weight to be closely contacted with the valve seat 211 (213) or 230 (232) in the valve casing 201 or 220, thereby preventing liquid from reversely flowing. Even in the case where liquid containing a sedimenting material such as slurry is
15 used, therefore, the sedimenting material can be prevented from staying and aggregating inside the respective check valves 20 and 21.

 Since the suction ball type check valve 20 of the pump P is disposed in the pump P and the discharge ball type
20 check valve 21 is disposed in the inflow port 23 of the accumulator A, the pump P can be made smaller or more compact as compared with the case where both the suction ball type check valve 20 and the discharge ball type check valve 21 are disposed in the pump P. Furthermore, the discharge
25 ball type check valve 21 is placed in close proximity to

the accumulator liquid chamber 31. Therefore, the pressure of the liquid which is discharged from the liquid chamber 9 via the discharge ball type check valve 21 is not substantially lowered from the discharge pressure of the pump, and
5 can flow into the accumulator liquid chamber 31 while maintaining the high pressure.

In the pump P, the inner bottom face 4a of the liquid chamber 9 is formed into a shape in which the face is downward inclined as moving toward the discharge port 19, and
10 hence also liquid containing a sedimenting material such as slurry can be smoothly discharged along the downward inclined face of the inner bottom face 4a toward the discharge port 19, and the sedimenting material can be prevented from collecting and setting on the inner bottom face
15 4a. In the accumulator A also, the inner bottom face 28a of the liquid chamber 31 is similarly formed into a shape in which the face is downward inclined as moving toward the outflow port 24, and hence also liquid containing a sedimenting material such as slurry can be smoothly discharged
20 along the downward inclined face of the inner bottom face 28a toward the outflow port 24, and the sedimenting material can be prevented from collecting and setting on the inner bottom face 28a.

In the pump P, the extending and contracting portion
25 of the bellows 7 which is configured by forming the ridge-

like folds 71 and the valley-like folds 72 in a vertically alternate and continuous manner is formed into a shape in which the lower one of the upper and lower lamella portions 71a and 71b of each of the ridge-like folds 71, or the lower lamella portion 71b is downward inclined as moving toward the axis B, not only in an extending state but also in a contracting state. Even in the case where transported liquid containing a sedimenting material such as slurry is used as transported liquid, therefore, the sedimenting material in the bellows 7 easily slips down along the downward inclined face of the inner face of the lower lamella portion 71b of each of the ridge-like folds 71, and does not stagnate and collect on the inner face of the lower lamella portion 71b, whereby, in cooperation with prevention of staying of sediment on the conical inner bottom face 4a, sedimenting and aggregation of sediment in the pump P can be prevented more effectively from occurring. In the accumulator A, similarly, even in the case where liquid containing a sedimenting material such as slurry is used as transported liquid, the sedimenting material in the bellows 29 easily slips down along the downward inclined face of the inner face of the lower lamella portion 291b of each of the ridge-like folds 291, and does not stagnate and collect on the inner face of the lower lamella portion 291b, whereby, in cooperation with prevention of staying of sedi-

ment on the conical inner bottom face 28a, sedimenting and aggregation of sediment in the accumulator A can be prevented more effectively from occurring.

In the embodiment described above, the pump P and the accumulator A are separately configured, and the outflow passage 6 of the former and the inflow passage 33 of the latter are communicatively connected to each other through the joint 65. Alternatively, as shown in Fig. 15, the bottom wall 4 of the pump P and the bottom wall 28 of the accumulator A may be integrally formed, and the outflow passage 6 of the pump P and the inflow passage 33 of the accumulator A may be communicatively formed in the bottom walls 4 and 28. According to this configuration, the joint 65 and a connecting and piping work can be omitted.

Each of the suction ball type check valve 20 and the discharge ball type check valve 21 comprises the ball valve elements 202 or 221 vertically arranged in two stages to constitute a double closing structure as in the embodiment. This structure is advantageous because quantitative supply of the transported liquid can be ensured. Each of the valve casings 201 and 220 is configured by the first valve casing 210a or 220a and the second valve casing 201b or 220b which are vertically separated so as to facilitate incorporation of the ball valve elements 202 or 221 into two vertical stages. However, the valves are not restricted to

such a configuration. As shown in Fig. 16, for example, the valves may have a single ball valve element 202, and the valve casing 201 may be configured into a single body. Although, in the embodiment, a suction check valve of a pump has been described, also a discharge check valve of a pump disposed in an accumulator can be similarly configured.

In the embodiment described above, ball type check valves in each of which valve closing urging means is configured by own weight of the valve element are used as the suction and discharge check valves of the pump. However, the invention is not restricted to the configuration. As shown in Fig. 17, for example, check valves in each of which valve closing urging means is configured by a valve closing spring inserted into the valve casing may be used. Specifically, the suction check valve 20 disposed in the suction port 18 of the pump P is configured by the valve casing 201, the valve element 202, and a valve closing spring 62 inserted into the valve casing 201. The valve element 202 is urged by the resilient force of the valve closing spring 62 so as to be closely contacted with the valve seat 211. By contrast, the discharge check valve 21 of the pump P disposed in the inflow port 23 of the accumulator A has a structure similar to that of the above-described suction check valve 20, and is configured by the

cylindrical valve casing 220, the valve element 221, and a valve closing spring 63 inserted into the valve casing 220. The valve element 221 is urged by the resilient force of the valve closing spring 63 so as to be closely contacted with the valve seat 230. When the valve elements 202 and 221 are resiliently pressed by the valve closing springs 62 and 63 against the valve seats 211 and 230 as described above, the valve elements 202 and 221 can be surely urged to close the valves, and hence it is possible to suppress chattering from occurring. In the embodiment, the valve elements having a ball-like shape are used. Alternatively, valve elements having another shape such as a semispherical shape or a truncated conical shape may be used. In the check valves, the valve closing urging means of one of the valves may be configured by a valve closing spring, and that of the other valve may be configured by the own weight of the valve element.